

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

-----074193 011301Z /43

O 011150Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5903

S E C R E T MOGADISCIO 0398

EXDIS - DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, ET, SO

SUBJ: WITHDRAWAL OF SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY FROM THE OGADEN.

REF: STATE 049635

1. THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM THE OGADEN IS THE MOST DIFFICULT POLITICAL STEP PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE HAS EVER FACED. I CANNOT COMPLETELY GAINSAY THE ARGUMENT THAT HE WOULD RATHER SUFFER A MILITARY DEFEAT THERE THAN WITHDRAW VOLUNTARILY, BUT I STILL HOLD THAT HE WOULD RATHER BRING HIS ARMY OUT IN TACT IF THAT CAN BE DONE WITH THE ARMY UNSULLIED AND WITHOUT UNTOWARD RISK TO HIS PERSONAL POSITION. IN PRACTICE THIS MEANS THE ARMY MUST NOT BE SEEN AS DEFEATED BY THE ETHIOPIANS, BUT RATHER YIELDING WITH ITS HONOR IN TACT TO AN EVERWHELMING COMBINATION OF OUTSIDE FORCES INCLUDING CUBANS AND SOVIETS. SIAD'S ROOTS IN THE SOMALI ARMY ARE DEEP. IT IS IN MANY WAYS HIS OWN CREATION AS WELL AS THE PRIMARY INSTRUMENT OF HIS POWER. I CANNOT SEE HIM CASTING IT AWAY IN A GAMBLE TO MAINTAIN HIS HOLD ON THE COUNTRY.

2. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT, A RELATIVE PAUSE IN THE DECLINE OF SOMALI MILITARY CAPABILITY IF NOT A TEMPORARY STABLE MILITARY SITUATION, SIAD WILL BE WILLING TO MOVE WITHOUT SOME FURTHER CLARIFICATION AND INDUCEMENTS

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FROM THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE NOT MADE A SERIOUS ATTEMPT TO RESPOND TO THE QUESTIONS REGARDING CONSULTATION WITH THE SOVIETS, THE ETHIOPIANS, AND OUR ALLIES POSED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR GENERAL ON FEB 18, (MOGADISCIO 0314) NOR HAVE WE ATTEMPTED TO RESPOND TO THE SUBSEQUENT AIDE-MEMOIRE (MOGADISCIO 0317), ADMITTEDLY A MORE POLEMICAL DOCUMENT, DELIVERED TO ME ON FEBRUARY 20.

I FIND IT NOT SURPRISING THAT SIAD HAS DEFERRED TAKING ANY DECISION ON WITHDRAWAL. THE PRESENCE OF HIS ARMY IN THE OGADEN IS STILL HIS BEST CARD. BEFORE HE PLAYS IT, HE WILL WANT TO HAVE A VERY CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT HE MAY EXPECT IN RETURN.

3. ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL PROBLEMS SIAD MUST DEAL WITH IN CONSIDERING A WITHDRAWAL IS THE FATE OF THOSE SOMALIS WHO ARE OGENDENIS OR ABOS. SOME ARE OBVIOUSLY INTEGRATED INTO REGULAR SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY FORCES, AND MAY PREFER TO DESERT RATHER THAN LEAVE THEIR FAMILIES TO AN UNCERTAIN FATE AFTER A WITHDRAWAL. OTHER IRREGULAR UNITS MAY CONSIST ENTIRELY OF OGENDENIS. SIAD HAS A VALID POINT IN ASKING TO WHAT LOCATION DO THEY WITHDRAW? IN SHORT, THE QUESTION OF WITHDRAWAL IS SO COMPLEX THAT IN MY VIEW IT CAN HARDLY BE SEPARATED FROM OVERALL NEGOTIATION. I DO NOT SEE HOW WE CAN EXPECT SIAD TO MAKE A UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL THAT IS NOT RELATED TO SECURITY GUARANTEES FOR THE POPULACE AND INDIGENOUS FIGHTING FORCES OF THE OGADEN, SOME ASSURANCE THAT THE SOMALI ARMY IS NOT GOING TO BE ATTACKED BY ETHIOPIAN AND CUBAN AND ALLIED AIR AND GROUND FORCES AS IT WITHDRAWS, AND SOME FACE-SAVING FORMULA, AN OAU RESOLUTION OR UNSC RESOLUTION THAT REQUIRES NOT ONLY SOMALI WITHDRAWAL, BUT SOME APPARENT CONCESSION FROM THE OTHER SIDE AS WELL WHICH POINTS TO EVENTUAL IF NOT IMMEDIATE CUBAN AND SOVIET WITHDRAWAL.

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4. THE MECHANICS OF THIS ARE ALSO VERY IMPORTANT. SIAD IS ESSENTIALLY AN ORAL POLITICIAN. WHEN AMBASSADOR ADDOU HAS SOMETHING URGENT TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, HE RETURNS TO REPORT IN PERSON. THEREFORE I THINK THE BEST WAY TO DELIVER A MESSAGE TO SIAD IS VIA A HIGH RANKING PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY. THIS WOULD PRESENT A PARALLEL TO THE AARON MISSION. I ALSO BELIEVE THE OFFER OF A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER IN WASHINGTON WOULD BE A POWERFUL INDUCEMENT, BUT I AM CERTAIN IT SHOULD NOT BE LINKED TO WITHDRAWAL. I BELIEVE WE WOULD GET THE MAXIMUM RESPONSE IF WE COULD OFFER SIAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THE WHOLE SITUATION IN WASHINGTON WITHOUT MAKING A COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW A PRE-CONDITION OF HIS TRIP. WE COULD STRESS THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL WANT TO PRESENT THAT POINT TO HIM IN THE FRAMEWORK OF AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT. SIAD HAS HIS PRIDE, AND I BELIEVE WOULD AT THIS TIME BALK AT THE REQUIREMENT HE GIVE SUCH AN UNDERTAKING BEFORE DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON. I DO NOT BELIEVE AN ULTIMATUM OR ANY FORMULATION APPROACHING AN ULTIMATUM WOULD SERVE ANY USEFUL PURPOSE.

5. THE ENVOY WHO COMES TO MOGADISCIO TO DEAL WITH SIAD MUST

BE ONE THE SOMALI LEADER RECOGNIZES AS HAVING THE FULL TRUST AND CONFIDENCE OF PRESENT CARTER, AND WHO CAN SPEAK WITH THE PRESIDENT'S FULL AUTHORITY. THE ENVOY MAY BE DRAWN FROM EITHER THE DEPARTMENT OR THE NSC STAFF SO LONG AS THE LINK WITH THE PRESIDENT IS CLEAR. I SHOULD ALSO NOT RULE OUT VETERAN DIPLOMATIC TROUBLE SHOOTERS SUCH AS CLARK CLIFFORD. I DO BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL, HOWEVER, THAT THE SAME ENVOY WHO WENT TO ADDIS ABABA NOT BE ASKED TO UNDERTAKE A MISSION HERE. THE SOMALIS REGARD THE AARON MISSION AS ILL-CONVEIVED AND PREJUDICED TO THEIR CAUSE. SIAD WOULD INEVITABLY BE SUSPICIOUS AND RELUCTANT TO DEAL WITH THE PERSON WHO LED THAT MISSION. IN THE INTERESTS OF GETTING THE BEST POSSIBLE RECEPTION, I THINK WE OUGHT RECOGNIZE THOSE SUSPICIOUS, HOWEVER ILL-FOUNDED.

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6. I DO NOT BELIEVE SIAD'S ARAB FRIENDS OR IRAN CAN DO MORE THAN CONTRIBUTE TO A WITHDRAWAL CONSENSUS. AT SUCH TIME AS WE DECIDE HOW TO PRESS FOR THE DECISION, I THINK WE OUGHT TO ENLIST ARAB AND IRANIAN ASSISTANCE AT THE TOP LEVEL TO BE CERTAIN THAT SIAD SEES ALL OF HIS FRIENDS AND ALLIES AGREED UPON A COURSE HE MUST TAKE. THIS TOO WILL BE USEFUL TO HIM IN DEFENDING THE STEP AGAINST HIS CRITICS HERE WHOSE POWER AND INFLUENCE WE CANNOT FULLY ASSESS, BUT WHOSE PERCEPTIONS AND ACTIONS WILL BE IMPORTANT TO SIAD.

7. NON-MILITARY INDUCEMENTS SUCH AS INCREASED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE WILL BE IMPORTANT TO SIAD, BUT NOT GOVERNING. I DON'T THINK WE CAN BUY HIS DECISION, BUT AN INCREASED ASSISTANCE OFFER COULD SUPPORT A DECISION HE WILL HAVE TO JUSTIFY TO HIS GOVERNING COLLEAGUES. MOREOVER, IT SEEMS TO ME WE WOULD WANT TO BE IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE BOTH PARTIES SUBSTANTIAL WAR-RELIEF PROGRAMS IF A SETTLEMENT CAN BE ACHIEVED. WHAT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO SIAD IS SOME GUARANTEE OF AN IMMEDIATE SOURCE OF ARMS SUPPLY. I AM TROUBLED BY THE ARITHMETIC OF CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF THIRD COUNTRY US ARMS TRANSFERS. ARE FIFTY DAYS REQUIRED, TWENTY DAYS FOR STAFF COURTESY, AND THIRTY DAYS NOTICE FOR CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW? I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW WE CAN DEAL IN THAT KIND OF DELAY IF OUR OFFER IS TO HAVE AN VALIDITY. A PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY MUST BE PREPARED TO DEAL IN SPECIFICS SHOULD QUESTIONS OF DELIVERY TIME ARISE, AS THEY UNDOUBTEDLY WILL.

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Message Attributes

Automatic DecapTIONing: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, ARMED FORCES, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 mar 1978
DecapTION Date: 01 jan 1960
DecapTION Note:
Disposition Action: Released in Full
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: 200202525
Disposition Comment: RECORDING OF CLASSIFICATION/RECLASSIFICATION ACTION IN SAS (STATE ARCHIVING SYSTEM) BY THE DESIGNATED AUTHORITY FOR THIS ACTION, WHO HAS APPROVED RECLASSIFICATION AND OR EXTENSION ACTION ON THIS DOCUMENT.
Disposition Date: 04 mar 2008
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: Released in Full by JOHN MILLS on 04-MAR-08 ;
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOGADI00398
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P850070-1702
Format: TEL
From: MOGADISHU MOGADISCIO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803120/aaaadxti.tel
Line Count: 164
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 83c4d1ba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 78 STATE 49635
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3157812
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WITHDRAWAL OF SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY FROM THE OGADEN
TAGS: MOPS, PBOR, EAID, US, ET, SO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/83c4d1ba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014